

Atty Dkt. No.: CLON-037CON  
USSN: 09/839,696

In the claims:

Claims 1-13 (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) A method for synthesizing carboxymethylated aspartate agarose chelating resin, said method comprising:

- (a) forming oxirane-agarose;
- (b) conjugating aspartic acid to said oxirane-agarose to produce aspartate agarose;
- (c) carboxymethylating said aspartate agarose to produce carboxymethylated aspartate agarose; and
- (d) complexing said carboxymethylated aspartate agarose with a metal ion other than  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  to produce a complex that offers two available valencies, wherein said metal ion is a transition metal ion.

15. (Original) The method, according to claim 14, wherein said conditions for oxirane-agarose formation comprise carrying out the formation at about room temperature, overnight, adjusting to about pH 7.0.

16. (Previously Presented) The method, according to claim 14, wherein said conjugating aspartic acid to said oxirane-agarose comprises reacting said oxirane-agarose and said aspartic acid at about 80°C for 4 hours.

17. (Previously Presented) The method, according to claim 14, wherein said method further comprises washing said aspartate-agarose to remove extraneously bound metals.

Claims 18-37 (Cancelled).

38. (Cancelled)

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